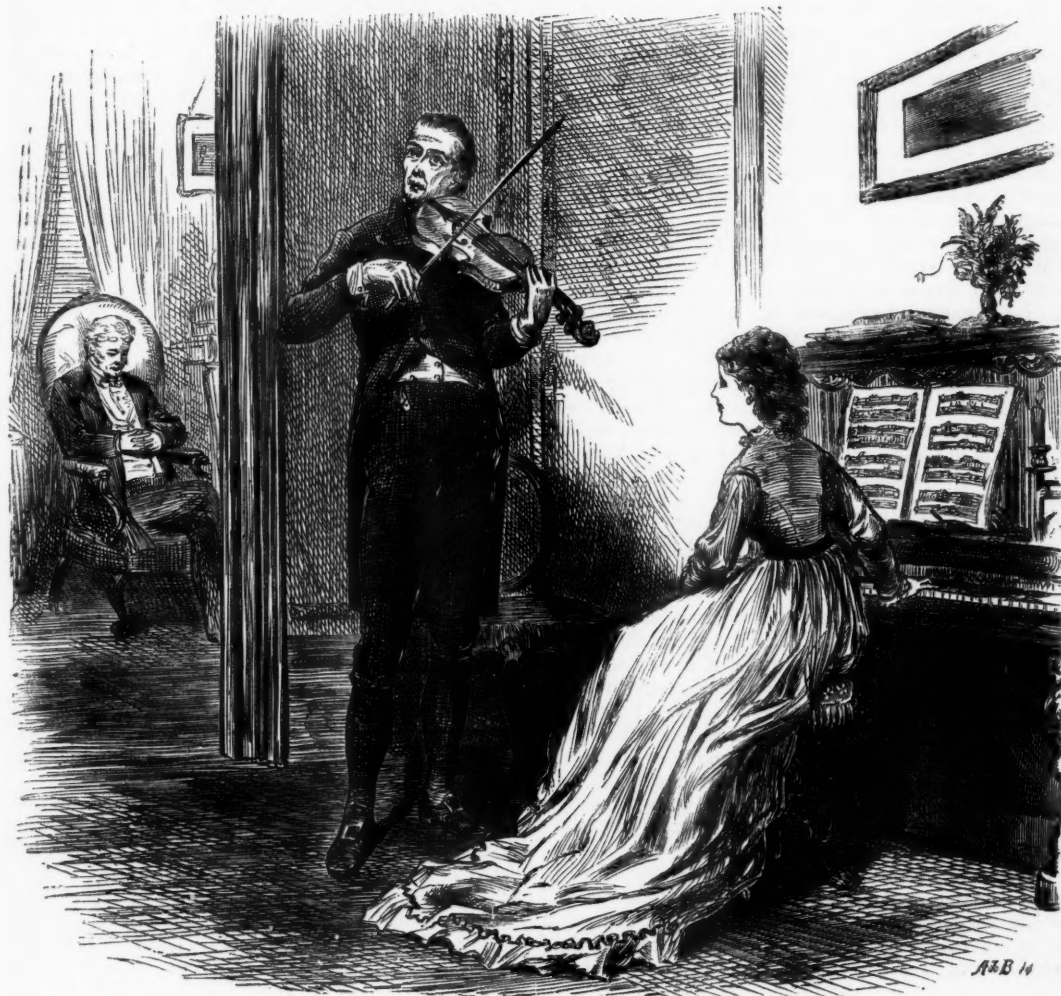


THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cowper.*



MR. PURRFOY ENJOYS A MUSICAL EVENING.

THE MASTER OF AYNHOE.

BY MRS. PROSSER.

CHAPTER I.—THE OLD MANOR HOUSE.

THE street, the main street of the straggling village of Aynhoe, was long and irregular. Here stood a gabled dwelling whose upper story overhung the lower, and threatened to topple over it; lying back, as if to get out of the way of such a catastrophe, stood three thin red-brick houses, all exactly alike, children of one birth, with bright knockers, white blinds, and a

genteel aspect altogether. Then came the inn, a square stone, small-windowed, substantial-looking building, divided from its neighbours by its skittle-yard one side and its stabling on the other. An inn of considerable traffic it was, for Aynhoe stood well for custom, being on the high road between two populous towns, and a sort of halting-place for the adjacent hamlets. Cottages of various sizes and shapes clustered together as you left the inn behind you, and were divided by a narrow lane, down which the smallest and worst of them dived, as if to hide

themselves from the comfortable mansion of a retired tobacconist, who preferred spending his savings in the place where he was born and bred to being a great man among strangers; in which he showed as much good sense as good feeling, as we shall presently show. The shop general, being the repository of grocery, drapery, chemicals, and miscellanies too numerous to mention, was close on the heels of the tobacconist's mansion, flanked by the baker's and the butcher's, who would not have been able to support a pure unmixed trade if they had not each of them added to it the culture of a little land, and milked cows and made butter for Aynhoe consumption. It was a long street, and the reader would be tired to walk all down one side and all up the other, so he must fancy the rest from the specimen described, only that the low red-brick school-house, with its lattice windows and ancient broad-headed-nail-studded door, must not be left out, for that was a very important element in the prosperity and honour of Aynhoe, and is the hinge on which our story turns. Nor must the signboard of the shoemaker be overlooked, it was no less than a defiance to England, Scotland, and Ireland to produce better or cheaper shoes and boots than were manufactured by Whitehall Wickbury, who would have included Berwick-on-Tweed in his challenge had his board been large enough to contain it. At the very bottom of the street, on rising ground, stood the church, a venerable structure, the porch ivy-covered, the tower partly wood and partly stone; the iron railing that fenced it in from undue intrusion inclosing so numerous a company of the ancient inhabitants of the place and district that it seemed questionable if the present generation would not have to seek graves elsewhere.

Standing by the old gabled building we started from, the church looked as if it really crowned the street and completed the village, but this was merely the effect of distance, for there were other buildings near and beyond it, and a cross street did actually separate from the main street, so that this appearance was but an illustration of the effect that distance has in softening down interruptions and blending things truly apart.

It was a bright moonlight night, and the shadows of the buildings on one side lay in many a beautiful form across the street; while the other side shone out resplendently, the moon's full face being directly opposite to Wickbury's sign, which it seemed to be reading with profound attention. Everybody ought to have been in bed, but everybody was not, for in an upper window of the gabled house, which was on the dark side of the street, there twinkled a light, feeble indeed, but still a light, and it was not the night-light of a sleeper, for a shadow now and then passed between it and the blind; yet it was past midnight. Standing beneath the window thus illuminated, you could hear a weird sound; it was not a groan, nor a scream, nor a cough, nor a whistle, but a mixture of all. To know whence it arose we must go into the room, for the blind revealed nothing more than the shadow described.

It was a long, narrow, low-roofed room. On the table, not far from the window, was a candle, the beacon we beheld from without; on the table was a skeleton-desk for holding music, and before this, partly between the candle and the window, sat a person whom it will take more than one whole sentence to describe.

Very tall, very thin, very pale; his hair turned off from his face and tied behind; his dress entirely black (that is, *brown*, once black); knee-breeches with buckles, shoes with buckles, and a buckle to his stock behind. And yet he did not look like a man who cared for ornaments, whether of the buckle or of any other kind; no, he looked as if he must have been born in the clothes he was to wear all his life, as the dolls dressed for bazaars are, and so was no more accountable for his covering than for the skin it covered. He had such eyes! great, lustrous eyes; dark grey, if they were any colour at all; but they changed in their expression so wondrously, you would hardly know them to be the same eyes when they were sorrowful, that shone on you so brightly in a moment of joy. A long, thin nose, and a mouth continually at work, twisting itself into strange shapes to accompany the language of the eyes, conveying its share of the depths of melancholy when its corners drooped, of intense thought when it contracted to a ring, of extatic joy when it expanded to a smile; for a mouth, it was certainly one of the most interesting studies that a physiognomist could contemplate. His head was classical, with a fine forehead; as he bent towards the table, or rather towards the desk on it, he formed altogether an attractive picture, for there was refinement in his air and grace in his movements, and although so very tall and thin as to verge on awkwardness, his whole contour had yet its own peculiar beauty.

But what was the noise? It had ceased; he had been tuning his fiddle.

It was a poor affair, an old Dutch fiddle that could not originally have cost more than half a guinea; neither was it a clean fiddle, but covered with rosin, and dirty besides; but no firstborn in its snowy lace and downy muslins was ever more daintily handled, or more lovingly hugged, than was this dirty fiddle by its owner, who had been at much pains to mend two broken strings, and altogether to make it satisfactory to his ear, which was acutely alive to a false note or discordant sound. And now, with his long legs twisted into their favourite contortion, he began. Vivaldi, Tesserini, and Corelli, Bach, Handel, and some other dearly loved masters, lay around him—on his chairs, on his bed, up in the corner, on the table, and on the floor. He was in the depths of one when we first beheld him.

Suddenly, most unkindly, just as he had arrived at a part where his mind followed the masters with the most intense interest, the candle went out, not by any mysterious agency, but by the sorry matter-of-fact of dropping down into the socket, for there was no raiser, or lifter, in the candlestick, consequently when the dissolution of the candle had advanced to a certain stage, its remains went plump down to the bottom of the stick, sending up an unpleasant smell and lurid smoke by way of farewell.

Mr. Purefoy had been thus served many and many a time, but he was not the man to grow wise by experience; therefore he went on putting himself in danger of this eclipse night after night, and retired to bed with a sigh of lament that candles were so short and his stick so imperfect, getting into his nest at last as he could in the dark, through various hindrances, and to the upset generally of more than one of the old masters.

Why not borrow a light, if he wanted it, or a candle, from his landlady or some fellow-lodger? Reader, he had neither landlady nor fellow-lodger;

the house was his own, and he lived alone in it. His forefathers had been high among the great ones of the neighbourhood, made so by large possessions, and still more by ancient distinction. Some few generations back, and the old gabled house had commanded the homage of Aynhoe as its manor-house, in which the squire's family kept up all the liberal hospitality of olden times.

Then, the inn, the red-brick houses, the whole street, in short, had no place; only the cottages of such as lived on the wages and rejoiced in the bounty of the Purefoy family were to be seen, nestling modestly among the old tree clumps with which the land abounded. Some of the oldest inhabitants remembered to have seen in childhood the funeral of the last resident squire, who had sorely diminished his estate by a long quarrel with an adverse neighbour. It must be a fund almost exhaustless that can bear the draining of law expenses. Field after field, yes, manor after manor, fell from the Purefoy property; and Squire Michael was said to have died almost broken-hearted at the condition in which he left his only son.

The inheritance was indeed a poor one. About three acres behind the old house, enclosed by a low wall, and once laid out in the elaborate terraced gardens of the day, and the old house itself,—this was all that remained free and unencumbered by heavy mortgage to the descendant of so time-honoured a race. After winding up his affairs, and commissioning his agent to let the manor-house, the young man turned away from the scene of decay and ruin, and was supposed to go abroad to try and restore his fortunes, but he never returned.

About fifteen years before our story commences, a stranger appeared one day standing in the street, gazing (as we did) at the old house. No one knew who he was, nor whence he came; but a rumour spread through the place, when the silver-headed old William Ridley, with whom the keys had been left, went with him to explore the old place, that it must be the heir of Squire Michael's son.

And rumour for once was right. It was Reginald Purefoy, to whom we have already introduced our readers.

Where he had been, where his father was, whether alive or dead, none knew; for no tidings of him had ever reached Aynhoe, since the day of his departure.

The house was at first too grand for any but gentry to inhabit, and gentry in those days had their own houses, and kept to them; therefore it had remained untenanted till decay began to lay its chilling fingers on it, and it bore a sad and sympathising resemblance to the fortunes of its owner.

Then it was fit for none but humbler seekers for a home; but, alas! it had got the character, from standing so long empty, of being haunted, and thus its fate was sealed. Squire Michael's ghost, it was affirmed, had been seen there, passing with a light inside the windows; and some positively asserted that they had watched him go back to the churchyard and glide behind the old Purefoy monument, through the grating, into the vaults beneath; but this was discountenanced by the less imaginative; and, indeed, it seemed too orderly and respectable a proceeding for such a sort of wanderer, after troubling and scaring people, to go peaceably home to bed again like an ordinary sleep-walker.

Very inquisitive was Aynhoe about Mr. Purefoy; his appearance was unlike that of the family, so

William Ridley said, yet the dignity of his air and manner impressed all with a respectful assent to his being what he claimed to be.

But how strange that he should come back to Aynhoe in his poverty! How strange that he should choose to live in the old, mouldy, crumbling-away house by himself; no servant, only Whitehall Wickbury's wife "to do for him, by now and thens" The gossips were obliged to content themselves with thinking it strange, for he was not one from whom to ask an explanation. One only business transaction he had after settling down in his paternal home—he let the lower part of the house and the land behind it; the house to a wool-stapler for bestowal of his goods, and the land to the butcher for his stock.

How wonders die out! People living in daily sight of the Alps or of Niagara see them with quieter eyes as they live longer; and thus it is that time and use blunt the edge of any marvel. When we were listening to Reginald's fiddle, he had become (we say it without any allusion to his music) an *old song* in Aynhoe, and little as the inhabitants knew of him, they thought less in the way of mystery. This was not to be wondered at when we consider that but few remained who had even childhood's recollections of the Purefoys. The houses had sprung up like mushrooms around the ancestral dwelling; the street had been carried right in front of it, and if it had not been for the distinction it had received in the title of "Purfy's House," it is possible all trace of the family would have been obliterated.

The respect, therefore, with which Reginald was treated he procured for himself, not by haughty isolation from his neighbours, nor by any assertion of his aristocratic descent, but by a superiority so felt that it was never disputed, which saved him, poor and powerless as he was, from being interfered with, and left him as free from molestation as ever his grandfather's ghost had been.

CHAPTER II.—THE PEOPLE OF AYNHOE.

It is said "extremes often meet." They did in Aynhoe; Mr. Benjamin Trueman, the retired tobacconist, was not nearer as a neighbour than he was remote as a contrast to Reginald Purefoy.

What an abode of comfort was his house—that substantial, trim, bright, well-adorned house! How snug, as well as handsome, were all its inner appointments; some fragrant odour, just strong enough to please without offending, always mingling in the genial atmosphere of the hall, met the visitor when the door opened, as if to assure him with hospitable haste of good fare and a hearty welcome. The sofas were large and soft, the chairs easy. No expense had been spared in any of the furniture, and although fastidious judges might take exception to the mingling of colours, the generality looked with profound admiration on Aynhoe House, as it was called, and its handsome fitting-up. Nobody was better satisfied with it than Mr. Trueman himself; he had brought very few things away from his old house and shop, only such as he entertained a special regard for, or had a particular reason for not leaving behind. Among the latter was a huge figure of a Scotchman with his arm extended, as if about to take a pinch of snuff. This figure had stood at the entrance of his shop in town, but when his successor bought his business he declined the purchase of Honest Sandy, as being out of keeping with modern

taste; therefore Mr. Trueman had him repainted and transported to Aynhoe, where he stood in the corner of the hall, looking as if he could not take his snuff for smelling the dinner. Mr. Trueman had no idea of ornament without use, it was contrary to his ideas of comfort; therefore the Scotchman's extended arm now held umbrellas, and his head, with its Glengarry cap, supported, not unfrequently, Miss Trueman's garden bonnet, or, what was quite as unbecoming to it, Mr. Trueman's wide-awake hat. When Miss Trueman the younger, Benjamin's only daughter, came home from a finishing school she was much shocked that her father should so have perpetuated his town history, and she took special care, knowing that no remonstrances would cause his removal, to cover Sandy with the ample folds of her waterproof or some other drapery whenever she expected visitors.

Mr. Trueman had been born in one of the cottages that we noticed as diving down the lane to hide themselves, but his parents, though very poor, were honest and industrious. As soon as he was old enough they sent him to the low red-brick square-windowed school, where he learned well to read, write, and cipher; where, better still, he learned the principles of the Christian faith in the words of the Bible. The master, finding him intelligent and docile, exerted himself successfully on his behalf, till he got him apprenticed to a tradesman in London, where he remained till he was able to set up for himself. As his means grew he increased in the generous help he afforded his parents, who, although they had not the happiness of basking in the full sunshine of his prosperity, yet lived long enough to bless the day when God had given them so good a son. Neither was he wanting in gratitude to his old master, whose silver hairs he looked on with filial affection and respect.

His only sister, Miss Trueman, who had begun her life in service, and continued it as his shopwoman, had slid down without much emotion into her present position. At first she had felt rather averse to settling in Aynhoe, where their origin was so well known; but she soon found that every one was willing to forget "little Sally Trueman" in the Lady Bountiful of the place, which station it was her brother's ambition she should occupy with unostentatious liberality.

"Yes, yes, Sally," he said, when the question of their destination was being debated; "it's what I've always set my mind upon and looked forward to. I'm not ashamed of my birth because it was lowly, nor of my schooling because it was cheap: there's no disgrace on the name of our parents; and as to the old master, there isn't a bishop that oughtn't to be proud to shake hands with him; I owe everything to my good training, and where my good fortune took its rise, there it ought to be spent; so we'll go and show the Aynhoe folks the value of good principles, and follow up that benefit by giving liberally among them what God has given so liberally to us."

This was, at least, the gist of Mr. Trueman's reply to his sister, and he forthwith began to build the house we have already described.

One word more about Mr. Trueman. He was the kindest of brothers, but he had no opinion whatever of his sister's taste; there were times when he did not feel quite sure about his own; on such occasions his thoughts invariably turned to his daughter Annie, of whom he was as proud as he was fond, and whose superior education, together with a great deal of natural quickness, gave her no small influence over him.

Annie had been at home about twelve months when our story opens, during which time her aunt had subsided indoors into a mere cypher, but this did not trouble her; a cypher, though it holds no leading responsibility, is an important element in a group of figures; and Miss Trueman comforted herself by reflecting that though she held no foremost rule, her brother would have considered the household very imperfect without her: so like a round, well-made, comfortable cypher, she remained placid and content.

Annie, with a large share of her father's good, sound sense, had a vivacity and brightness which she inherited from her mother, the daughter of a merchant, with whom Mr. Trueman had become connected by transactions in trade. This gentleman had consented to the somewhat unequal match from his high estimate of the tobaccoist's worth; being one of the minority who believe that the foundation of married happiness does not necessarily lie in money or blood. Mr. Trueman revered his wife's memory, and cherished Annie with the more tenderness that she reminded him so often of her mother; while she loved him with the most ardent filial gratitude.

A spirit of concord reigned in the house of which the fragrant odour that pervaded the hall was a type. The three characters, dissimilar, played so well into each other's ins and outs, that if they could not be said to think and feel in *unison*, they at any rate made excellent *harmony*, and that is the best and richest kind of music after all.

But if the walk up Aynhoe Street was too long to venture on, our readers would be yet more tired to go into all the houses; so we will leave old William Ridley, the schoolmaster, and Daniel, his son and successor, and the Wesleyan minister and his wife (who lived in one of the three red-brick houses), and the curate of Aynhoe, who lived next door, and Mrs. Gravit, the widow, who occupied the third, and Michael Bunt, the innkeeper, and the butcher, and baker, and general shopkeeper, and Whitehall Wickbury, and all and every other of the inhabitants to come out from their veils by degrees.

What! the butcher and baker and general shopkeeper?

Yes, reader, *you* never lived in Aynhoe, or you would know that they were characters of much importance there; and so were some of the people who lived up beside and behind the church, of whom we will speak presently.

Annie on her first coming home had felt greatly at a loss for company; at school so many lively companions of her own age had suited her entirely; she was not poetical, but she entered with her whole heart into the sentiment—

"Oh, Solitude, where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?"

and shuddered at the very thought of it. So after the novelty of home had passed, though she loved her father very dearly, and her aunt too, she wished herself back at school; for Mr. Trueman had more worth than ready wit, and did not get brighter as he grew older, and Miss Trueman, though an unexceptionable aunt, was a trial in the way of a companion.

But Annie was rightminded, and ashamed of herself for being discontented, and she had a happy elasticity of spirit that after discovering an evil made her next step one on the road to a remedy for it.

She looked round Aynhoe first in search of some from whom she might gain more than mere acquaintanceship could furnish; but except Miss Gravit, the niece of the old lady in the red-brick house, she saw none that promised well, and Miss Gravit was always so busy, either waiting on her sick aunt, or visiting the poor, or playing the piano and singing, that she could have but little of her society; so she contrived, being very persevering and not daunted by a trifle, to work herself up the sleeve of Mr. Purefoy, and to become his intimate friend and frequent companion, and his pupil in music and singing.

"For pay?" do you ask, reader.

No, purely for the love of music, and love of one so willing to learn, and, for special reasons, so alluring to him.

Annie was obliged to use some dexterity in forming this friendship, on which an accident led her to determine. She was talking to Mr. Kennet, the curate, about the singing in church.

"I think, Miss Trueman," he said, "there is not a finer choir to be found in the country."

"It certainly is very good indeed, I think Aynhoe is a musical place," she answered.

"Yes, thanks to Mr. Purefoy," said the curate.

"What a very interesting, curious-looking man he is," remarked Annie.

"He is a perfect musician, and a perfect gentleman, that is all I know of him, except that I may add, I believe him to be a good man—though so eccentric."

"I wish I knew him," said Annie, "I find I want so much teaching now that I am left to myself; and I want to work up my music, so useful for home recreation."

"Apply to Mr. Purefoy, he would not refuse you; he has taught all the choir by degrees; we owe our music to him; Miss Gravit herself, who plays so well, has altogether a different style since he gave her instruction."

"Do you really think he would teach me?—how could I get at him?" asked Annie, eagerly.

"Nothing easier—call on him with Mr. Trueman; invite him to your house; he seldom visits anywhere, but he would not refuse a cordial invitation, if you promised him music, and begged him to bring his violin," said Mr. Kennet.

The call was made.

Whitehall Wickbury's wife was cleaning the long low room, an operation it was not too often submitted to. On such occasions Mr. Purefoy would range, in melancholy mood, from room to room, solacing himself as he could with his fiddle, not unfrequently peering in with sad inquiring eyes upon Mrs. Wickbury, and suggesting that he thought *enough was done*.

He had just descended from one of these calls, when a knock at the front door perplexed him; he calculated, and the result of his calculations was that he would suffer more inconvenience by calling down the charwoman than by turning porter.

Who was it? Nobody that knocked ever called on him; such as came lifted the latch of the back door, and, standing at the foot of the broad staircase, cried out, "Mr. Purfy, sir?" all except Miss Gravit, and one or two chosen ones, who walked up to his room and announced themselves at the door of it.

But he saw there was no way of finding out who it was except by opening the door, so he opened it.

"Mr. Purefoy at home?" Mr. Trueman was going

to say, but he stammered at it, and rather fell back at the earnest look of those great speaking eyes.

Annie was confused too, but ingenuously began, seeing that it was high time to say something: "My father, and aunt, and I are come to ask you a great favour, Mr. Purefoy."

The timid half-blush with which she spoke greatly enhanced the power of her words; the lustrous eyes fell gently on her, and the lips obediently following their lead, formed into a smile.

Mr. Purefoy threw open the door, and with a graceful bow and wave of the hand beckoned them in, and led the way to the stairs; but on the landing-place he suddenly recollected the state of his room, and paused.

"If it is any inconvenience, Mr. Purefoy, for us to go up," said Mr. Trueman, who understood his perplexity, and felt sure the pause was not inhospitably meant, "we will do our little business here; I'm sure we are a large party to intrude on a bachelor, and have no right to be particular."

Mr. Purefoy was greatly relieved by this suggestion. The conference was carried on on the landing, and concluded with his full consent to transport himself and his violin to Aynhoe House that very evening.

"Oh! he is delightful," exclaimed Annie, as they returned.

"Very thin," remarked Miss Trueman.

"Quite a gentleman," said Mr. Trueman.

"What eyes he has!" said Annie.

"Yes, they rather startled me at first," replied her father.

"Reminded me of Red Riding-hood, and 'Grandmother, what great eyes you've got!'" said Miss Trueman.

"They are the perfection of eyes," said the enraptured Annie.

Mr. Trueman thought that the bright black ones dancing with delight as she spoke were much nearer perfection, but he only smiled.

Annie grew nervous as the tea-hour approached, and was divided between hopes and fears as to the success of the visit. Sometimes she wished they had extended the invitation to others, so as to give him a real musical evening; "but he can make *that* for himself," she thought.

Tea came and went, for Mr. Trueman, having stated his hours, never waited for any one. He was engaged with a book, over which he occasionally dozed, and Miss Trueman was making fringe for an antimacassar, when a quiet knock at the door made Annie start from the piano, at which she had been sitting, looking over, once more, the music she had selected. Her father opened his eyes very wide indeed, showing that they had just been closed, and Miss Trueman crossed her hands, which was her usual attitude of expectation.

The door opened and Mr. Purefoy made his appearance, his violin in his hand, in a green-baize bag, none of the tidiest.

Mr. Trueman ordered tea for him, apologising for not having waited, and Annie tried in vain to think of something to say, to break the silence that seemed settling down over the whole party, for her father could not go beyond showing his hearty welcome, and her aunt only sat and smiled cypher fashion. Mr. Purefoy, who did not seem to understand that he was late, that they had not waited for him, and that a second tea was brought on his account, looked as if he had left himself at home and sent an automaton to play proxy. He might have told them that

if Whitehall Wickbury's wife had not heard the invitation given and accepted, and gone over to him to refresh his memory, after having waited a full hour to see him start of his own accord, he would not have been there at all, having totally forgotten all about it as he sat at his desk in his recovered room, free once more from her invasion; but the number of things Mr. Trueman had said had had a confusing effect on him and put it out of his head.

Annie, desperate at the dead calm, timidly showed him a piece of modern music; he looked at it, twirled his mouth round in somewhat the form a baby's takes when it is going to cry, and slightly shrugged his shoulders. She brought a portfolio; he looked as she turned over piece after piece, and his long thin fingers nervously played with the green bag.

"If you would play something that suits you better?" she suggested.

As if relieved by the request, he soon freed his instrument, looked at it with an affectionate greeting, and began to play.

Annie was not musician enough to enter into the true beauty of the music; but she understood sufficiently to feel great delight, and when he had finished, his eyes turning to her and catching her look of intense interest and admiration, returned her gaze, with one so full of light and love, that her whole heart went out to him at once.

There was no difficulty now in keeping up the entertainment of the evening; concerto after concerto he played, seeming to gather fresh strength and spirit in the same ratio in which others would have been exhausted. Evidently he had forgotten where he was, and meant to go on as at home, till the candles went down in their sockets, but candles never took that liberty in Mr. Trueman's house!

Poor Mr. Trueman, he bore two concertos and a sonata with great magnanimity; he even tried to hum an accompaniment, and tap the table to keep time through the first two; but when a fourth and a fifth came in quick succession, he got very uncomfortable; he could not go to sleep—who could, with that scraping noise, beautiful as it was?—and he could not read, and although he was persuaded that he liked music very much, he felt sure he should have a shivering fit, if he had to sit still and listen any longer; so, to Annie's great dismay, he seized the moment of a note's correction to say that he was most grateful for Mr. Purefoy's kindness, he could never have believed so much could come out of that little thing, and he hoped he would not think of troubling himself any more that night; they were punctual people, and supper had been ready a quarter of an hour!

Mr. Purefoy, returning from his rapture, looked with a stranger's air at his host, and having comprehended that he was not to play any more, consigned the violin to the green bag and rose to depart.

Supper! no; he never ate supper!

Mr. Trueman assured him that he thought he would be a much stouter man if he did.

Wine! he never tasted it.

Mr. Trueman looked quite distressed, and entreated him to break the rule, assuring him he would play with twice the spirit if he did.

"I used to tune a little in the evenings, Mr. Purefoy. I've got a pretty instrument, cost me a good deal, and I always found that I played as well again after a glass of wine," he said.

Mr. Purefoy now looked all animation, and smiled on Mr. Trueman, the smile being sent in search of the superior violin.

"Fetch it down, Annie," said her father. "I looked for it to day and couldn't find it, for I thought you and I would have played our duets."

No; Annie had guessed as much, and had hidden it, for she knew the torture their duets would be to that fine and practised ear. But she obeyed, and Mr. Purefoy, taking it lovingly in his hands, examined it, touched a note or two, tuned it, and finally made it "make exquisite music."

There was a little more excitement in hearing his own fiddle perform so well, but Mr. Trueman soon got tired of that, and very impatient for his supper, from which he seemed now to be further off than ever. So seeing Mr. Purefoy would never stop with that fiddle in his hands, knowing at the same time that when he put it down he must leave it behind him, he said, "I'm glad you like the instrument, very glad, take it home with you if you like; you are welcome to use it as long as you please; indeed I'm growing stiff now, and I'd rather sit and listen to you and my little girl playing together, if you'll take my parts (they're quite easy, I assure you), than play myself."

Take it home! Mr. Purefoy's eyes looked the abode of thousands of rejoicing spirits—brimful and running over with delight, yet he hesitated and shook his head, growing grave and pensive.

"Oh, Mr. Purefoy, *do!*" exclaimed Annie, "I'm so glad you like it, and *will* you let us hear you play it again?"

"Come to me to-morrow," he replied, to Annie's great delight; and it must be confessed that Mr. Trueman's was not much less when he had vanished with a fiddle under each arm, leaving him a chance of his supper.

"Yes; a very gentlemanly, nice man, and an out-and-out performer, no doubt; but the worst of a genius is that it too often interferes with the comforts of life—*proper* comforts, I mean, Annie; why, if we were all such geniuses as he is, we should all be as thin, being, like him, half-starved!"

THE AMMERGAU PASSION PLAY.

It has been announced that representations of the Ammergau Mystery are to be renewed this season. They begin on June 24th, and will be continued throughout the summer, closing on the 24th September. Such is the intention, but no one knows what events may interpose to upset the programme. Last year the representations were roughly interfered with by the great war, some of the principal actors being summoned to military service. Although the newspapers have made many stay-at-home travellers acquainted with these strange doings, yet it may be well to give the readers of the "Leisure Hour" some account of the Ammergau play. It is interesting as a matter of history, being a curious relic of customs once common to all European countries, and not then regarded with the repulsion felt since the time of the Reformation.

This unique and remarkable performance, known as the Ammergau or Oberammergau Mystery, is celebrated every ten years. Oberammergau is the *upper* of two villages in the *gau* or valley of the Ammer. It is

a mountain village of the Bavarian Tyrol, and the inhabitants are chiefly supported by wood-carving, with which most of their cottages are plentifully adorned. More than two hundred years ago the grievous Thirty Years' War was followed by a pestilence, and the pestilence by a famine, in this and neighbouring villages. The inhabitants then made a law, that henceforth, every ten years, they would celebrate the Passion of Christ. The celebration has continued long after the celebration of nearly all other "mysteries" or "moralities" has passed away. It is remarkable also, that while the few remaining examples of the kind are justly considered to be open to serious objections, that at Ammergau has been vindicated, admired, and visited from all parts of Europe. It will be remembered that Milton's first sketch of the "Paradise Lost" was a sacred drama, and Luther said of those that were prevalent at his own time in Germany, that such spectacles often produced more impression than sermons. They have been found, however, irreverent and liable to abuse, and have been frequently interdicted. This reproach has not hitherto been applied to Ammergau, and during recent decennial exhibitions crowds of tourists have gone out to witness the sight, and several works of description have recently been published in this country on the subject. The author of one of these volumes, "Art in the Mountains: the Story of the Passion Play," Mr. Henry Blackburn, thinks that the inhabitants of the mountain village will not long retain that earnest unsophisticated character which has principally helped to give their performance its world-wide celebrity, and that it is hardly likely that any future celebration will equal that which was broken up by the war so suddenly and sadly.

A few words about it will be here given, and we refer those who are curious of further details to the writings of Mr. Blackburn, Dean Stanley, and Mr. McColl. The music of the Passionspiel was composed by the village organist and schoolmaster. The words have always been very carefully examined, in order that they should be free from offence and should adhere strictly to the Biblical narrative. The performers amount to several hundreds, and include a very large proportion of the villagers. There is a large building of plain timber, nearly all open to the sky, where the performance takes place. There is a view of Jerusalem, rudely painted by a village artist, as a drop-scene, and a background is furnished by the mountain, which gently slopes upwards, and "might remind the Eastern traveller of the Mount of Olives." On the occasion of the representation the village overflowed with visitors; the people made up some twelve hundred beds, many slept in waggons, and many went and returned the same day. All night through the watch is called, at dawn a cannon is fired, and soon after seven in the morning the people crowd in. There was a charge for admission, and if the war had allowed any surplus funds they would have been devoted to charitable purposes. Six thousand people were collected, and so intense was the silence that you might hear the wind murmuring in the trees. The great mass of the people are humble peasants, and although there is much which to English readers must appear irreverent and profane, we are assured that these are the last ideas which would be suggested by those who saw the scene, for they listened with the deepest attention, and were deeply moved by what they witnessed.

There are two opening tableaux. The first represents the angels with fiery swords driving Adam and Eve from Paradise; in the next there are "angels bringing glad tidings upon earth." Then begins a series of seventeen scenes, each of which is accompanied by one or more Biblical tableaux. Dean Stanley says that these tableaux are of most unequal interest, "yet powerfully contribute towards the variety and the continuous flow of the performance." The first scene represents Christ's entry into Jerusalem. Winding along the slopes of Olivet and the long side streets of Jerusalem are figures in Oriental garb waving palm-branches in their hands. The garb of the different characters—and, indeed, of all the figures—is marked with very great care and accuracy, in some instances imitated from the paintings of the old Italian masters. The principal part was last borne by Joseph Mair. It is interesting to know that the King of Prussia exempted him from active duty, and assigned him guard service. Mr. Blackburn says: "It was as if the finest picture of the Saviour that had ever been painted by the early Italian masters was moving before us; the noble figure, the sad, worn, dignified face, not the ideal of Da Vinci, but something to our minds much more touching and human." The face of Mair is said very much to resemble that of a famous painting by Rubens. Yet the higher feeling revolts from such an impersonation of the Divine Redeemer. Judas has the red beard and the yellow robe, denoting envy; Peter, barefooted, has a blue robe and yellow mantle; John has a red costume: all according to the old masters. The interpretation of Judas was wonderfully done. The writer whom we have already quoted says: "The open-air effect, the spring foliage, the blue sky overhead, the singing of birds, and the rustling of wind through the trees, all added to the illusion; and the actors themselves, who wore their own long hair and often had bare feet, had altogether—standing in the sun and casting fitful shadows on the stage, their robes and hair blown about by the wind—an air of reality about them that it is impossible to convey to the reader in words."

The first half of the representation lasted four hours, and was suspended at mid-day. At half-past twelve a gun sounds, and the people again crowd in under the broiling sun. The representation culminated in the Betrayal and Crucifixion, and was concluded by the Resurrection and a vision of glory. In all the representations there is something repellent to Christian feeling, and we cannot say that we look forward with any regret to their probable cessation. At the same time, we must do justice to people of another land, living under very different conditions to our own, and who really appear to bear their part in a reverential and religious spirit. The following is the preface to the choral hymns, which all the spectators hold in their hands: "May all who come to see how the Divine man trod this path of sorrows, to suffer as a sacrifice for sinful humanity, well consider that it is not sufficient to contemplate and admire the Divine Original; that we ought rather to make this Divine spectacle an occasion for converting ourselves into His likenesses, as once the saints of the Old Testament were His fitting foreshadowers. May the outward representation of His sublime virtues rouse us to the holy resolution to follow Him in humility, patience, gentleness, and love. If that which we have seen in a figure becomes to us life and reality, then the vow of our pious ancestors will

have received its best fulfilment; and then will that blessing not fail to us with which God once rewarded the faith and the trust of our fathers." Such, at least, is the quotation of the preface of 1860 as given by Dean Stanley.

There are some curious points to be noticed in reference to these representations. There were many English visitors on whom the effect produced was very much the same as on the simple-hearted villagers. They seemed "a congregation" deeply impressed. "There was one figure who was sitting near us during the day, a well-known face and a well-known name in London society, whose customary place at that hour in the afternoon was the bow window of a West-end club, who was literally bathed in tears." It is also an interesting fact that the adherence to Scripture being very close, the distinctive tenets of Roman Catholicism, even in this Roman Catholic country, do not emerge into prominence. St. Peter's denial of his Lord is the main fact brought forward, and the Virgin Mary seldom appears in the representation.

We have an affecting account of the sudden breaking-up of the representation, when the young men of Oberammergau trooped away to the army, and the whole thing was stopped. The Oberammergau Mystery altogether is an exceedingly remarkable and unique affair. It is as well that it should have been carefully examined and minutely described. Judged of at a distance, there is much to shock our English feeling; but judged of on the spot, the spirit of the performance appears more religious than theatrical. There seems a probability that the old custom will pass away, and if the awful solemnity which the unsophisticated mountaineers esteem it to be, should ever degenerate into a mere dramatic representation, it could not pass away too soon.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICA.

BY THE EDITOR.

XVI.—NIAGARA.

WERE you disappointed with Niagara? The question was so frequently asked that I began to think some feeling of disappointment was almost expected. Well, I was disappointed, and I was not disappointed. The first sight of the Falls was something quite different from what imagination had ideally forecast, but the actual impression remaining far surpasses even the vastest anticipation of what was to be seen.

My first sight of Niagara was at a distance of three or four miles, from the railway-car on approaching the suspension bridge by the Grand Trunk line. I was unprepared, and on looking out from the window, suddenly saw the whole range of the Falls, with the overhanging cloud of mist, lighted up by the clear sunshine. The view was only for a few short minutes, being soon hidden again, but this first sight remains as a picture rather of beauty than of sublimity. Again from the bridge there was a nearer view, but still it seemed like a beautiful picture, in which the Falls formed only part of the broad sweep of landscape, set in a bright blue sky.

The country for many miles before approaching Niagara is tame and flat, the line passing between rail-fenced fields, dotted with stunted and often charred trees, and with patches of forest at intervals.

Nothing else breaks the monotony of the prospect. Looking in the direction of Niagara there is no lofty range visible, and no scenery that might indicate or give expectation of the grand spectacle to which we are hastening. The noise of the train also conceals the roar of the "thundering water," as Niagara means in Indian language. In the stillness of night the sound is said to be audible at more than thirty miles distance, but this element of grandeur was also absent from the first introduction to the Falls.

I went to the International Hotel, one of the two great houses on the American side. The other, the Cataract Hotel, is higher up, on the brink of the Rapids. The International is nearer the Ferry House, and the Grove, from one part of which, View Point, the photograph was taken which is copied in our frontispiece. This is certainly the place for obtaining the finest near view of the Falls. The eye looks across the whole breadth of the nearer division of the river, at the end of the Rapids, just as the water is about to sweep over in the long line of the American Fall. The breadth of this division is here about 800 feet. On the other side is Goat Island, densely covered with trees, and beyond is seen the Canadian or Horseshoe Fall, about 1,800 feet in width. From the Great Fall there constantly rises a column of spray, spreading like a cloud before the wind, and in sunshine sparkling or iridescent.

Gazing on the scene from this spot, the grandeur of Niagara "grows upon you." From the first near view every feeling of disappointment has vanished. Long hours I stayed at this spot, fascinated by the scene.

Looking from the Falls to the river below I was struck with the strange stillness of the water. It seemed hardly to be in motion. Long streaks of foam floated here and there, in fantastic shapes, and with scarce perceptible progress. A little ferry boat was passing to and fro, rowed leisurely by a single oarsman, within pistol-shot of the descending cataract. There used to be a small steamer, the "Maid of the Mist," which took passengers up amidst the spray of the Horseshoe Fall, so little disturbed is the surface of the water after the great plunge. I suppose the motion is intenser at greater depth, for the river less than a mile farther down shows tumultuous agitation. Some miles lower there are rapids again. When the erection of the suspension bridge rendered the trade of the steamer less profitable, she was sold to a Montreal speculator, and in a wonderful way escaped being dashed to pieces in passing this point of the river, and in a shattered condition at length reached her destination.

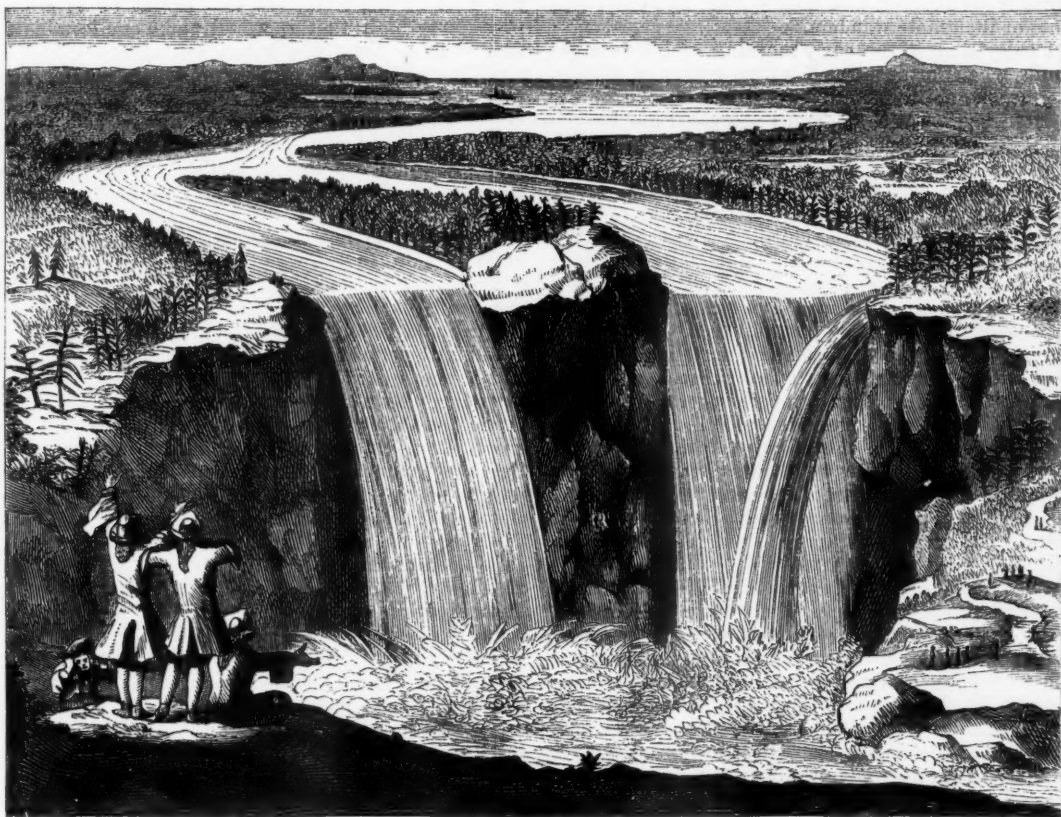
The strange stillness of the water below the Falls is more striking on returning from a ramble along the margin of the Rapids, where the water is seen wildly careering towards the great plunge. There is a foot-path close to the stream, behind the International and Cataract Hotels. Many will think the Rapids a more impressive sight than the Falls. Certainly there is more sense of active power in the swift resistless course of the hastening torrent, before it comes to its passive mechanical descent at the Fall. I met an old man who was one of the party actively engaged in the attempt to rescue a poor fellow who had been carried down from a boat which had upset. He clung to some timber which got fixed in a little islet in the midst of the Rapids. Twice a boat was launched, but the rope of one got entangled in the

rocks, and the other was rolled over by the torrent. A raft was formed, and floated towards him. All efforts were useless, and he was at last hurried away by the surging torrent into the abyss. Many tragic narratives and legends of this sort are told at Niagara.

A light bridge across the Rapids leads to Goat

Island, and other minor factories, but all such utilities tend to disturb the grandeur of the natural scenery.

The same disturbance of enjoyment is effected by the obtrusive guides, and touters, and sellers of relics and curiosities who infest Niagara. The little town which has grown up beside the Falls is a busy



FATHER HENNEPIN'S SKETCH OF NIAGARA, 1677.

Island, with its wonderful sights, the "Cave of the Winds," "Biddle's Stairs," the "Terrapin Tower," and other often-described scenes. There is rather too much of the artificial in Goat Island, but the sight of the Great Fall surpasses in sublimity all that has been anticipated. At the "Horseshoe" centre of the Fall, the colour is bright green in sunshine and dark green in shade, the volume of water being estimated here at about twenty feet in thickness. At shallower parts of the Fall the water is broken into white foam as it curls over to its plunge. The vastness of the volume of water can now be realised, and we better understand the estimate that "every hour ninety millions of tons are poured over the precipice, or twenty-five millions of cubic feet every minute!" The total area of the great lakes, Superior, Michigan, Huron, St. Clair, and Erie, is said to exceed 80,000 square miles, and all the surplus water of these vast inland seas has to pass by this small outlet towards the ocean.

"What a waste of water power!" was the exclamation of a practical American after surveying the Falls. In a small way the power is utilised; the stream of the rapids being used for a paper mill on

bazaar during the season. Rows of "curiosity shops" attract the visitors, some with real and others with sham Indians, engaged in manufacturing the objects for sale. Excepting the articles cut out of the limestone rock of the place, and the photographic views, none of these objects have any special connection with Niagara. The bazaars are filled with trinkets and fans and ornaments, sold by smart shop-girls, as in the Broadway or on our Burlington Arcade. In winter the shops are shut up, and the sellers go back to the cities, leaving but a small resident population. The hotels are also shut up for the winter. I was told by one of the residents, whose house was among those nearest to the Falls, that the grandeur of the scene in winter is indescribable. Huge masses of ice borne down the Rapids add to the wild tumult of the cataract. He told me that, before a tempest, either of rain or snow, the noise of the Fall is intensified, and the ground is shaken so that the lamps and movables in the house vibrate with the motion. For some months the country round is covered with deep snow.

Crossing by the suspension bridge to the Canadian side I saw the magnificent view from the Clifton House Hotel, which commands the whole range of

both Falls. A little above the hotel is a small inn, with a museum, the proprietor of which reaps a rich harvest during the season. On one day during my stay a monster excursion train of Freemasons came to Niagara, with band and banners. Five or six hundred half-dollars paid as entry money to the museum, besides the purchase-money for curiosities, must have been a good haul for the sagacious showman who exhibits his Indians, and moose deer, and other animate or inanimate wonders.

I enjoyed most the early morning and late night strolls, when the place was free from crowds of visitors. It was the full moon of September on one of the nights when I was there, and I witnessed the beautiful scene of a lunar rainbow on the American Fall. The roar of the cataract could be best heard at some distance. In the Grove near the Ferry House, the sound was overpowered by the croaking of bull frogs, and the ceaseless chirping of the Katitid crickets. I never heard even amid Italian marshes such a riotous uproar of batrachian and insect voices.

I have written more than I intended of my own impressions of Niagara, but will make up for the triteness of the remarks by presenting to my readers a most interesting extract from the "Travels of Father Hennepin," the first European who ever saw, at least the first who ever described, the Falls. I found a copy of his book in the library of the Historical Society of Boston. He was a Franciscan missionary in Canada in the last part of the seventeenth century, and made a journey towards the region of the Great Lakes.* Here is the passage in which he describes Niagara:—

"Betwixt the Lake Ontario and Erie there is a vast and prodigious cadence of water which falls down after a surprising and astonishing manner, insomuch that the universe does not afford its parallel. 'Tis true Italy and Sweedland boast of some such things; but we may well say they are but sorry patterns, when compared to this of which we now speak. At the foot of this horrible precipice, we meet with the River Niagara, which is not above half a quarter of a league broad, but it is wonderfully deep in some places. It is so rapid above the descent, that it violently hurries down the wild beasts while endeavouring to pass it to feed on the other side, they not being able to withstand the force of its current, which inevitably casts them down headlong, above 600ft.

"This wonderful downfall is compounded of two great cross-streams of water, and two Falls, with an isle sloping along the middle of it. The waters which fall from this vast height, do foam and boil after the most hideous manner imaginable, making an outrageous noise, more terrible than that of thunder; for when the wind blows from off the south their dismal roaring may be heard above fifteen leagues off.

"The River Niagara having thrown itself down this incredible precipice, continues its impetuous course for two leagues together to the great rock above mentioned, with an inexpressible rapidity; but having passed that, its impetuosity relents, gliding along more gently for two leagues, till it arrives at the Lake Ontario or Frontenac.

"Any barque or great vessel may pass from the fort

to the foot of this huge rock above mentioned. This rock lies to the westward, and is cut off from the land by the River Niagara, about two leagues farther down than the great Fall; for which two leagues the people are obliged to carry their goods overland, but the way is very good, and the trees are but few, and they chiefly firs and oaks.

"From the Great Fall unto this rock, which is to the west of the river, the two brinks of it are so prodigious high that it would make one tremble to look steadily upon the water, rolling along with a rapidity not to be imagined. Were it not for this vast cataract, which interrupts navigation, they might sail with barques or greater vessels above four hundred and fifty leagues farther, cross the lake of Huron, and up to the farther end of the Lake Illinois; which two lakes we may well say are little seas of fresh water."

Then he tells how *Sieur de la Salle* intended to build a fort, to keep in check the Iroquese and other savage nations, and to form a commerce in skins of elks, beavers, and other beasts for the English and Dutch in New York.

The title-page of the book is worth transcribing:—

"A new discovery of a vast country in America, extending above four thousand miles between New France and New Mexico; with a description of the great lakes, cataracts, rivers, plants, and animals: also the manners, customs, and languages of the several native Indians, and the advantages of commerce with those different nations; with a continuation giving an account of the attempts of *Sieur de la Salle* upon the mines of *St. Barbe*, etc. The taking of *Quebec* by the English; with the advantages of a shorter cut to *China* and *Japan*. Both parts illustrated with maps and figures, and dedicated to his Majesty King *William*. By *Lewis Hennepin*, now resident in *Holland*. To which are added several new discoveries in *North America*, not published in the French edition. London: Printed for *M. Bently, J. Tonson, H. Borwick, O. Goodwin, and S. Manship*. 1698."

The frontispiece of *Father Hennepin's* book is a view of the Falls as he saw them, a copy of which we give. It will be observed that the line of the Great Fall is straight, not curved as now into the form which has given it the name of the "Horseshoe Fall." The form of the cataract is slowly but constantly changing. The reason is to be found in the geological formation. The rocks are partly shale and partly limestone. The former is more readily worn by the water and the frosts, and moulders away more rapidly than the harder limestone. The rate of recession has been calculated, and the time must come sooner or later when the cataract will approach the upper lakes, and the length of the Rapids diminish. As it is, there are from time to time huge avalanches of falling rock, which already accumulate at the base of the Falls, especially on the American side. At some places the *débris* rises nearly a third of the height of the water, reducing greatly the apparent size of the Fall. *Father Hennepin* exaggerated the height when he guessed it at six hundred feet. It scarcely exceeds a fourth of this height. The *Victoria Falls* on the *Zambesi River* in *Africa*, and the recently discovered Falls in *British Guiana*, exceed *Niagara* in depth of fall, but the vast volume of water, and the beauty as well as grandeur of the scene, still keep *Niagara* at immeasurable distance as the greatest of waterfalls.

* His book was first published in France in 1675, and was translated into English. An abstract of it is given in the first volume of the "Transactions of the American Archaeological Society." The French edition is very rare. There is a copy of the English translation in the British Museum.



NIAGARA FROM VIEW POINT, ON THE AMERICAN SIDE.

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MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

INCIDENTAL NOTES AND PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS.

BY JOHN TIMBS.

VII.—DORKING CELEBRITIES—COTMANDENE—BETCHWORTH CASTLE—DEEPDENE—BOXHILL—FANNY BURNEY—
SIR LUCAS PEYPS—DENBIES—SIR BENJAMIN BRODIE—SHERIDAN.



AMONG the clerical celebrities of Dorking at this period, I remember the Rev. Samuel Hoole, only son of John Hoole, the translator of Tasso and Ariosto, who received his early instruction in Grub Street, from his uncle, "the metaphysical taylor," who used to draw squares and triangles on his shop-board. Samuel Hoole was born in a hackney coach, which was conveying his mother to Drury Lane theatre, to witness the performance of the tragedy of "Timanthes," written by her husband. In early life, Samuel Hoole ranked among the literary characters of the last century, and for some years before his death, in 1839, had outlived all the persons who frequented the *conversazioni* of Dr. Johnson, with whom he prayed in his last illness. He long kept as memorials the chair in which the doctor sat, and the desk upon which he mostly wrote his "Rambler." Mr. Hoole was educated at Merchant Taylors' School, and afterwards went to Oxford. On his visits to his kinsman, the vicar of Dorking, he usually preached at Dorking church, and his sermons were much approved. Mr. Hoole was much esteemed by Dr. Johnson, by whose will he was enabled to take from his library and effects such books and furniture as he thought proper to select, when his choice fell upon the Johnsonian chair and desk.

In an old gabled house in the middle of the town of Dorking, lived the widow of the Rev. Owen Manning, who made collections for the "History and Antiquities of Surrey," which, after his death, were put into the hands of Mr. Bray, treasurer of the Society of Antiquaries, by whom was completed and published the well-known "History of Surrey," in three folio volumes. The venerable Mrs. Manning was one of the few persons I remember to have seen walking with a high cane: she was usually accompanied by her two stately maiden daughters.

At the east end of the town is Shrub Hill, where lived the Earl of Rothes, in a red-brick house, partly of the time of Charles II. Here the earl and his countess entertained her Majesty Queen Charlotte at a sumptuous breakfast on her return from Brighton to Windsor, in 1816, for which mark of loyalty and attachment (upon a suggestion of the Prince Regent) the Queen in the following year honoured the countess with a pension from the Crown.

In the rear of Shrub Hill lies Cotmandene, a piece of common or waste land, about twelve acres, sloping away on two sides, and partly closed in by the grounds of the Deepdene. Manning and Bray give no explanation of the name; but a correspondent of "Notes and Queries," 3rd s. ix. 322, states that in the "Domesday of St. Paul's," so excellently edited by Archdeacon Hale, "*Cotmanned*" occurs, A.D. 1222, at Barnes, in the same county. "There seems to be some connection between the terms; and possibly we may have here a relic of the old *Cotarii*, or *Cotamanni*, cottagers who occupied houses without any land attached, and may have been allowed to use some meadow or pasture land in common, hence termed the cottagers' dale or mead." Salmon supposes Cotmandene to have been once "a camp or fortified part," lying close to the military way (Stane Street). He also mentions it as a spot famous in

everybody's mouth "for a most healthful air;" and upon the margin of a map of Surrey (*temp.* Charles II) is noted, "Cotmandene, said by physicians to be the healthiest air in England." Here, about two centuries since, were built almshouses for eighteen alms men and women.

The Betchworth Castle estate has been long famed as one of the most delightful retreats in Surrey. The mansion was embattled in the first year of Richard II; but the greater part of the castle was pulled down in the reign of Queen Anne, and the rest converted into a dwelling-house. As the seat of Abraham Tucker (Edward Search) it will ever be remembered with respect. An embattled portion of the castle remained on the western bank of the River Mole; but the chief glories of the estate were its noble trees: a magnificent triple avenue of limes, which has been compared to the nave and aisles of a Gothic cathedral. Here likewise were many fine elms, and Spanish chestnut-trees. Of fourteen of the latter, the circumference of the boles, at three feet from the ground, ranged from seventeen to twenty-three feet; and two of them were upwards of nineteen feet in girth, and four others about twenty feet. They are thought to be coeval with the enclosure of the park in 1449. The picturesque castle mill remains: heretofore the tenants were obliged to grind at the "Lord's mill;" it was held of the Abbess of Godstone, by the payment of a *rose* at midsummer in lieu of all services. At a short distance is Chart or Chert Park, once named the Vineyard, from the plantation of vines on the slope of the hill, it is said by the Hon. Charles Howard, the celebrated chemist; where I remember to have seen a large mill-stone, such as was used in crushing grapes, from which good wine was made.

The far-famed Deepdene estate, enlarged by the annexation of the Chart Park and Betchworth Castle properties, is about twelve miles in circumference. I enjoyed permission to roam through the Deepdene, a privilege which I sought to acknowledge in the second edition of my "Picturesque Promenade round Dorking," published in 1823, and dedicated to Thomas Hope, Esq., in these words: "As I am prompted neither by interest, nor by vanity, the dread of criticism shall not induce me to deny myself the gratification of acknowledging how much I am indebted for the mental pleasure which you have so often been the means of affording me. In the perusal of your '*Anastasius*,' and in wandering amidst the picturesque and classically-adorned scenery of your domain of Deepdene, I have spent some of my happiest hours, the remembrance of which will not easily be erased."

The estate is named from the Saxon *Deep den*, a deep vale, which applies to the natural configuration of the grounds. Two centuries ago, it was described by Evelyn as "Mr. Charles Howard's amphitheatre, garden, or solitarie recess, being fifteen acres environed by a hill," and possessing "divers rare plants, caves, and an elaboratory." Somewhat later Aubrey described the place as "a long *hope* (*i.e.*, according to Virgil, *deductis vallis*), in the most pleasant and delightful solitude, for house, gardens, orchards, boscages, etc." The Hon. Charles Howard "hath cast this hope in the form of a theatre, on the

sides whereof he hath made several narrow walks, which are bordered with thyme and some cherry-trees, myrtles, etc., orange-trees, and syringas, and "a pit" stored full of rare flowers and choice plants. Aubrey, in his gossiping, odd way, refers to the grounds as "an epitome of Paradise and the Garden of Eden seems well imitated here; and the pleasures of the garden were so ravishing that I can never expect any enjoyment beyond it but the kingdom of heaven." I revisited the Deepdene in 1857, and, dating my recollection of this beautiful spot more than half a century back, I was charmed with the rare success with which has been completed what may be termed the restoration of Mr. Howard's design. Here is no intrusion of art, but every embellishment is part and parcel of the natural scene. The flower-garden area, the steep amphitheatral banks clothed with trees and shrubs in luxuriant and picturesque variety, and the long flight of steps ascending to a Doric temple and a noble terrace with an avenue of graceful beech-trees—almost realise in the spectator even Aubrey's quaint ecstasies. In part of the old garden, lying low in the hope upon some old brickwork that formed part of Mr. Howard's elaboratory, is a tablet bearing some elegiac lines to his memory, written by Lady Burrell in 1792. How fitted is such a sweet spot for the delightful pursuit of philosophy and science! When it is recollected that in the adjoining mansion Mr. Hope wrote his fascinating "Anastasius," and that Mr. Disraeli's political novel of "Coningsby, or the New Generation" (which is dedicated to Mr. H. T. Hope) "was conceived and partly executed amid the glades and galleries of the Deepdene," it must be regarded as a delightful retreat made the more interesting by the associations of genius and taste.

The deep vale, giving name to the estate, is connected with the bold amphitheatral ascent that leads to the terrace, which is skirted by a double line of well-grown beech-trees. Here, facing Chart Park, is a stone Doric pediment, supported by two columns. On the pediment is inscribed "Fratrī Optvmo, H. P. H.," by which inscription Mr. Thomas Hope commemorated a rare act of generosity on the part of his brother. At the extremity of the Chart grounds, Mr. Hope also erected a spacious family mausoleum, capable of containing twenty bodies. Two of his sons, who died in their youth, are buried here; as is likewise Mr. Hope, who died February 3rd, 1831, at his residence in Duchess Street. The mausoleum had been consecrated as a burial-place by John (Beresford) Bishop of Raphoe, in the autumn of 1818.

Box Hill, near whose foot lies the Deepdene, is named from the common box (*Buxus sempervirens*), which grows wild throughout Surrey.* "Nothing bolder in its form, though on a small scale, can be conceived than the two deep parallel glens with which the hill runs sheer down to Mickleham, and the almost precipitous bastion with which it changes its aspect, clothed on the top and sides with thick evergreen groves of the box, here rising almost into the size of a small tree, and interspersed with the darker evergreen of the yew, of which a line-tracing farther on the half-height of the hill indicates for many

miles the famous 'Pilgrims' Road.' Beyond this hill, the tumbled down is densely speckled with a wild growth of juniper. Across the valley of the Mole, the down range runs westward in Norbury, with its beeches and yews, and in the high grounds of Ranmer Common stretches on till it forms that Hogsback along which the traveller loiters, charmed with the view on one side and the other till cheerful Guildford is reached" ("Saturday Review," 1859).

The Box Hill of forty years before this date was more sparsely covered with its *viretum*; the ramblers, then few and far between, have increased many fold, and Mr. H. T. Hope very considerably erected on the summit a cottage for their accommodation. The story is remembered of Major Labelliere, who, in 1800, was buried here with his head *downwards*; in order, he said, that as "the world was turned topsy-turvy, it was fit that he should be so buried that he might be *right at last*." Still, he but paraphrased Diogenes, who desired to be buried downwards, feeling sure, he said, that things would soon be topsy-turvy: this was an allusion to the growth of Macedonia.

The delightful country seen from Box Hill had, early in the present century, a sort of literary renown. Norbury Park has an ancient history. In 1774 it came into the possession of William Lock, Esq., who took down the ruinous old manor-house, and erected another mansion on the crest of the hill, which, from the beautiful scenery it commands, has no equal in the south of England. Mr. Lock has been characterised as "the Mæcenas of English Literature and Art," and whom Gilpin eulogised thus—

"If judicious Lock
See not an error he could wish removed,
Then boldly deem thyself the heir of fame."

To Norbury came Thomas Lawrence in early life, and here he was "encouraged to make his first and only attempt at modelling, and finished an eminently successful likeness of his venerable friend." "I am not afraid," he says, "of forgetting this dear man, and know that I am the better for his life and death. It is thus a blessing as well as a distinction to have known him." And again, "I go to Norbury, to witness grief and resignation, the one as sincere, the other as pious, as can exist in the tenderest and most virtuous mind. Mr. Lock is to be buried, by his own accurate directions, in the simplest manner, and exactly as his mother was—a walking funeral, and the coffin borne by his labourers" ("Handbook of Dorking"). He died in 1810.*

The lively novelist, Fanny Burney, who wrote her first work, "Evelina," and had it printed unknown to her father, who was a hater of novels, but was delighted with his daughter's, was befriended by Mr. Lock; and at his table Fanny first met General D'Arblay. The attraction was mutual, but there was parental disapproval to overcome. Kind Mr. Lock interceded for the lovers, a reluctant consent to the marriage was obtained, and Mr. Lock, at the

* The plant, which is deemed both peculiar and indigenous to Surrey, is the Cut-leaved Annual Germander (*Teucrium botrys*). *Teucrium* is said to be derived from Teucer, the name of the Trojan prince, who first used the plant medicinally. *Germander* is a compound Greek word, signifying ground-oak, the leaves resembling those of the oak, and *botrys* is a bunch. *Teucrium botrys*, therefore, means the bunch-like ground-oak.—*Flora of Surrey*, by J. A. Brewer.

* Mr. Lock was a collector of sculpture: he once commissioned Jenkins, a dealer in pictures residing at Rome, to send him any piece of sculpture which might not exceed fifty guineas. Jenkins sent a head of Minerva, which Mr. Lock, not liking, returned, paying the carriage and all other expenses. Nollekens, who was then also at Rome, having purchased a trunk of Minerva for fifty pounds, upon the return of this head, found that its proportion and character accorded with his torso. This discovery induced him to accept an offer made by Jenkins of the head itself; and 220 guineas to share the profits. After Nollekens had joined the head and trunk, or what is called "restored it" which he did at the expense of twenty guineas more, for stone and labour, it proved a most fortunate hit, for they sold it for the enormous sum of 1,000 guineas, and it is now at Newby, in Yorkshire.

altar of Mickleham church, gave away the bride. The young couple settled temporarily in a small cottage at Bookham, where Madame D'Arblay wrote "*Camilla*," and published it by subscription; and with the proceeds of the book Mr. Lock had a cottage built for the authoress at Westhumble, on a piece of his own ground, which received the name of *Camilla Lacey*. General and Madame D'Arblay resided here several years, and on their return to France the house was considerably enlarged, a portion of the original cottage being preserved within the new house.

We find little about the beautiful country in Madame D'Arblay's novels, or her *Diary*. In the summer of 1786 she was appointed second keeper of the robes to Queen Charlotte. This appointment she owed partly, it is said, to her literary reputation; but much more, we believe, to the friendship of the venerable Mrs. Delany, with whom Miss Burney had become very intimate. At Mrs. Delany's their Majesties saw Miss Burney, who on a vacancy in the office of keeper of the robes, was appointed assistant, but the choice seems not to have been very fortunate. "The inferior position was evidently a great grievance to Miss Burney, who was marvellously discomposed at finding that there was a bell, by which the Queen could ring for her; and who represents herself as blushing when the treasurer of the household paid her her salary, the treasurer himself, as Miss Burney fancied, blushing also at having to offer such an indignity to the author of '*Evelina*'" ("Quarterly Review"). Under these circumstances her office was relinquished; though she turned to good account her insight of Court life in her *Diary*, which has a most interminable wordiness; and we read in the "*Athenæum*" of a trunk full of unprinted manuscripts found some forty years ago at *Camilla Lacey*. Madame D'Arblay died Jan. 6, 1840, in her eighty-eighth year.

There was little remarkable in the exterior of the house at Norbury. The main glory of the interior was the saloon, painted with rich scenery by Barrett, Cipriani, Gilpin, and Pastorini, designed as a seeming continuation of the views without, but the effect was hardly successful. Gilpin has floridly described the magnificent prospects; and the celebrity of Mr. Lock's "painted room" spread far and wide. Soon after his death, the family quitted Norbury, and the mansion remained for some time unoccupied.

At Westhumble long resided Mr. Jeremiah Dyson, the friend of Akenside the poet. Here also lived Professor Daniell, once of King's College, the distinguished chemist and meteorologist. Juniper Hill, a fine house on the right of the London road, fronted by noble cedars, once belonged to Mr. Broadwood, the celebrated pianoforte manufacturer, who built the prospect tower on the adjacent summit of Box Hill. In the mansion, Talleyrand once found refuge from the storms of Revolution, as did Madame de Stael. Across the paddock opposite lies Fridley farm, during some years the retreat of Mr. Richard Sharp, F.R.S., who sat in parliament for Port Arlington. He was distinguished for his colloquial accomplishments as "*Conversation Sharp*," and here he received his friends Sir James Mackintosh, Francis Horner, and other persons of note. He left a charming volume of "*Letters and Essays in Prose and Verse*," full of world-knowledge gracefully conveyed, of which a third edition appeared in 1834, the year before the author's death. Well do I remember the ease and affable pleasantry of this great talker (not time-

waster), and the simplicity of his "blue and buff," such as Captain Morris rejoiced to wear. I find in one of Lord Byron's journals: "On Tuesday, dined with Rogers,—Mackintosh, Sheridan, *Sharp*,—much talk and good,—all except my own little prattlement."

At Juniper Hill, the large house on the right of the road, nearly opposite, Sir Lucas Pepys, Bart., the fashionable physician, usually passed his summers, appropriating certain days in the week to visit patients in town. Sir Lucas, in personal habits, was a physician of the last century: he was for some years President of the College of Physicians, and occasionally displayed his polished Latinity at the bedside of a patient. Once, I heard him inquire of the Dorking druggist the uses of the hundredfold contents of his bottles and drawers, and on being told "to dispense prescriptions," he pleasantly replied that he had never used but a dozen articles in all his practice. Sir Lucas died at the age of eighty-nine.

Denbies, on the high ground opposite to Box Hill, was originally a farmhouse, which Jonathan Tyers converted into a sort of anti-Vauxhall Gardens. At Denbies he formed a wood, which he called "*Il Penseroso*," wherein were a mystic temple, and a concealed clock which struck every minute; figures of a Christian and an unbeliever in their last moments; Truth treading on a mask, etc.; and in one of the walks were a male and female skull, with poetic inscriptions, said to have been written by Soane Jenyns. Manning says, "these grave conceits were done away" after Tyers's death. Denbies was purchased by Mr. Joseph Denison, in 1787. He was the son of a woollen cloth merchant at Leeds, and anxious to seek his fortune in London, travelled thither in a waggon, his friends on his departure taking a solemn leave of him, as the distance was then thought so great that they might never see him again. He was industrious, parsimonious, and fortunate, and soon advanced himself in the confidence and esteem of his employers, bankers in St. Mary Axe. He married successively two wives with property, continued to prosper, and by joining the Heywoods, eminent bankers in Liverpool, his wealth rapidly increased. By his second wife he had one son, William Joseph Denison; also, two daughters, both beautiful women, whom I have heard the country-people call "*The Roses of the Hill*"—Elizabeth, married in 1794, to Henry, first Marquis Conyngham; and Maria, married, in 1793, to Sir Robert Lawley, Bart., created in 1831 Baron Wenlock. Mr. Denison, sen., died in 1806; his son, succeeding to the banking business, continued to accumulate; and, at his death, in August, 1849, left two millions and a half of money. He had sat in parliament for Surrey since 1818. He was a man of cultivated taste, and possessed a knowledge of art and elegant literature. He feared to be thought ostentatious, and could with difficulty be prevailed to have a lodge built at the entrance to a new road to the house at Denbies, to which estate he had succeeded. The Marchioness Conyngham was left a widow in 1832. She died in 1861, having attained the venerable age of ninety-two, and lived to see both her sons peers of the realm—the one in succession to his father; the second, Albert Denison, as heir to her own brother's great fortune and estates, with the title of Baron Londesborough.

At East Betchworth is Broome Park (formerly Tranquil Dale), long the residence of Sir Benjamin

Collins Brodie, Serjeant-surgeon to the Queen and President of the Royal Society. At this beautiful retreat, at the foot of the fine range of the Betchworth Hills, Sir Benjamin passed such leisure as he could snatch from professional life. In his very interesting "Inquiries" are some traces of the work having been written in the tranquillity of Broome and its picturesque cedars, elms, and chestnuts, stream and sheet of water, and natural spring. In the opening pages, "the fresh air and quiet of his residence in the country" evidently refer to Broome, and throughout the volume are occasional references to the geniality of the place for the group of philosophers who keep up the mode of dialogue. The two volumes of "Inquiries," in their thoughtful tone bear resemblance to the two volumes produced in the retirement of Sir Benjamin's illustrious predecessor in the chair of the Royal Society, Sir Humphrey Davy; but with this difference—that Sir Benjamin Brodie's "Researches" are of more practical application than the speculative "Dialogues" of our great chemical philosopher, Davy.

Polesden, a beautiful estate at Great Bookham (which has a church of the reign of Edward III), a short distance from Norbury, was for several years the property of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. In 1792, his first wife (Miss Linley) died; and, in the spring of 1795, being then in his forty-fourth year, Sheridan married Miss Ogle, the Dean of Winchester's daughter,—young, accomplished, and ardently devoted to him. She brought him five thousand pounds, and with this and fifteen thousand more, which Sheridan contrived to raise by the sale of Drury Lane shares, subsequently (in 1804) Polesden was purchased of Sir William Geary, by Sheridan's trustees. Only those who are familiar with the picturesque beauty of the Vale of Norbury can appreciate the scenery of Polesden. The mansion was old, but sufficient for Sheridan. Its noble terrace commands a fine view of Box Hill; and in the rear of Polesden are some of the finest beech-woods in England. In his journeys thither from London, Sheridan usually took with him in the carriage a bagful of unopened letters, and read them on the road. He had no feeling for natural scenery, and cared nothing for its beauties. A very eminent lover of the picturesque writes: "At one time I saw a good deal of Sheridan. He and his wife passed some time here: he is an instance that a taste for poetry and for scenery are not always united. Had his house been in the midst of Hounslow Heath, he could not have taken less interest in all around it: his delight was in shooting all and every day, and my gamekeeper said, that of all the gentlemen he had ever been out with, he never knew so bad a shot." Sharpe was once complaining of the ugly house built by General D'Arblay, when Sheridan said, "Oh, you know we can easily get rid of that, we can pack it off out of the country under the Alien Act."

I remember to have heard in the village of Letherhead well-authenticated stories of Sheridan's mismanagement of his affairs, and his bad credit, while he lived at Polesden. Upon some occasion of public rejoicing, he left orders for the people to be supplied at his expense with beer, by a common brewer of the village; who, however, not liking his customer, refused to supply it. The people became uproarious, when a friend of Sheridan guaranteed the payment, and had eventually to disburse it. Wood was often cut and burnt green at Polesden;

and one day, an unfortunate butcher, who had, contrary to his master's orders, left some meat at the kitchen without payment, was sent back to recover the joint, and actually took it from the fire, and carried it off in triumph. Haydon tells a similar story: "When Sheridan was Paymaster of the Navy at Somerset House, the butcher brought a leg of mutton to the kitchen. The cook took it, and putting it into the kettle to boil, went up-stairs for the money, as the butcher was not to leave the joint without it. As she stayed rather long, the butcher very coolly went over, took off the cover, took out the mutton, and walked away. This is a fact. The cook told it to the porter of the Royal Academy, who, being my model, told it to me as he was sitting." I was once told by a pawnbroker in the Strand that he had more than once advanced money upon a cellar of wine in Somerset House, a seal being placed on the cellar-door, and the key deposited with the pawnbroker. Could this have been Sheridan's cellar and wine?

Towards the close of Sheridan's life there appeared in the "Morning Post" a communication without naming the person to whom it referred, saying, "Oh, delay not to draw aside the curtain within which that proud spirit hides its sufferings;" he then adds, with a striking anticipation of what afterwards happened:—"Prefer ministering in the chamber of sickness to ministering at

'The splendid sorrows that adorn the hearse;'

I say, 'Life and succour against Westminster Abbey and a funeral.' This communication was from Mr. Dennis O'Brien, who then resided in a well-appointed house at the south end of Craven Street, in the Strand. Here Sheridan was a frequent visitor, and was at home in O'Brien's convivial society. O'Brien held a colonial appointment, was undoubtedly employed in secret political service, and in frequent communication with the Prince Regent. But O'Brien fell into the luckless state of secret-service men, and was, at length, deserted by the party whom he had actively served.

At Effingham, adjoining Little Bookham, lived an old political friend of Sheridan's, Mr. Richard Ironmonger, in a handsome house, in fitting up which he displayed somewhat eccentric taste. He is understood to have benefited by his transactions with the Prince Regent, in acknowledgment of which he insisted upon every looking-glass in his house bearing the Prince of Wales's triple plume, carved and gilt. The house decorator remonstrated, and at length persuaded Mr. Ironmonger to give up all save one plume, of colossal proportions, placed over the principal glass in the drawing-room. Ironmonger had scarcely completed his house-fitting when Sheridan artfully advised him to go to France, and he would take the house, furniture, etc., off his hands for five years. To this Ironmonger consented; but he returned home, on account of Bonaparte's escape from Elba, in 1814, when he had great difficulty in regaining possession of his house. Ironmonger subsequently removed to Brighton, where, in 1824, we remember him in good position, as a magistrate, etc., living in a handsome villa upon the Lewes road, and here we found him one morning adjudicating in "flowered gown." Ironmonger's relationship to Sheridan reminded one of the spangle on the lion's tail, and in one respect their fortunes were cast in the same die. Ironmonger, aiming at parliamentary distinction,

was returned for Stafford, but did not live to take his seat; and Sheridan's defeat at Stafford seriously affected his health and spirits, and hastened his death.

ROOKSTONE.

CHAPTER XLVII.—LEROUX'S TIDINGS.

NEXT morning at breakfast Janet found Louisa and her mother in angry discussion.

"The fact of the matter is, my dear, that you are growing very self-willed and unfeminine, just like some one else I know!"

Janet's entrance checked Mrs. Webb's words.

Louisa looked sulky.

"It is so dull here," she said; "you do nothing but pay visits from morning till night, and Janet thinks of nothing but Christy. If I were going to be married I should take rather more interest in my gowns than you do, Janet. I want to go to Julia Fuller; she would like to have me, I know she would; there is some fun to be got out of Julia!" And Louisa gave a dreary sigh.

She had grown to like Henry Wenlock very much indeed.

While Janet had talked to Mr. Painson on the previous evening, Henry had stood beside Louisa at the piano, and had praised her singing.

"Poor dear fellow!" she sighed to herself, "it's all over with him; there's no chance of that ridiculous engagement being broken off now the day is fixed; but I know how he feels, it is quite a sacrifice; really if I'm to feel like this when he goes away, I would rather not see him any more till he is Janet's husband. Then I suppose there will be no danger in flirting with a married man; besides, he will be my cousin."

She said all this to herself in her own room, and then she remembered a long-standing invitation from an old school friend, and determined to accept it at once.

Before Janet left the breakfast table Louisa had carried her point. Her journey into Norfolk was to take place early next morning—but her mother made her promise to return at the end of a fortnight.

It was very trying, to Mrs. Webb that Louisa should be so restive just when all her schemes seemed likely to prove fruitful; but then, as she told herself, Louisa could be very unattractive when she chose to be so, and if her will was crossed in this matter she would probably sulk for a week. If Henry really cared for her daughter—and Mrs. Webb fondly cherished this hope—a short absence might awaken warmer feelings, especially just now when he had gone away angry with Janet; Mrs. Webb had been too far off to hear what had passed, but she had studied the young man's face intently during his talk with Janet.

"What an obstinate girl that is!" she said. Mrs. Webb was looking out of window, for busy as she asserted herself to be, she never lost sight of the doings of others. In fact, to watch, chronicle, and criticise these, for the mental food of her fellow-gossips, was the chief business of Mrs. Webb's life, and the work for which she appeared best suited. As she looked now, she saw Janet crossing the square.

"Going to old Painson's, of course. I could not have believed Janet so short-sighted, after Henry Wenlock's angry looks last night. I really do think

she likes the old man the best. Taking that child Christy with her, too—so very absurd. If she really felt the impropriety of the thing as she ought to feel it, she would have asked me to chaperon her. Not she! I really believe her abominable self-will has infected Louey."

Mrs. Webb's suspicion that Janet liked Mr. Painson grew stronger when Janet came back from her visit. Lately, the young girl's spirits had been daily recovering from the depression which so much sorrow had laid on them, but this morning she was silent and preoccupied. Mrs. Webb rallied her, but Janet's thoughtfulness was plainly caused by anxiety; she soon relapsed into it again, with bent brow and firmly-closed lips.

Janet was both unhappy and anxious. She had found it difficult to get Mr. Painson to listen to her on the subject of Leroux. He had been so eager to talk to her about herself and her feelings, and when she did succeed in fixing his attention, he treated her information lightly, and told her not to think about the matter—to send Leroux to him. He had been so strangely different—so excited, so changed from the half-scolding, fatherly manner she was used to—that Janet had felt puzzled and disquieted, and at parting from him the warm admiration his eyes expressed had made her withdraw her hand abruptly from the very close grasp in which he held it. She was sitting in her own room now—Mrs. Webb's joking and tittering laugh had become unbearable—and she asked herself why she had thus shrunk from Mr. Painson, why she felt such an unutterable repugnance from the idea of ever having again to consult him. A warm blush rose to answer her. She had thought Henry harsh and unreasonable, but she understood his meaning now; and yet it was too vain, too foolish to believe that Mr. Painson loved her. No; the reason why she shrank from him was because he had found fault with Henry. She went in thought slowly over the morning's interview, and her first conviction deepened. Mr. Painson had asked her very earnestly if she was quite sure that the marriage she contemplated would promote her happiness; and when she had answered him—half in doubt whether he were not jesting—he had sighed. "Of course I must believe your assurance," he said; "but I hope Mr. Wenlock will know how to treat a wife better than most young men do—ah!" and then he shook his head, and Janet got up to go away, feeling vexed and disturbed.

She began to think that it had been a mistake to consult any one except Henry. Mr. Painson had imagined that she reposed greater confidence in him than she did in her future husband; but then her mother had strictly enjoined her to consult no one but Mr. Painson, and she remembered, with a sudden new light on it, the lawyer's refusal to help her unless she promised entire secrecy.

"But he did not think about me then in this way, I am sure of it; and after all, it may only be a vain fancy of mine. Still, I cannot go to his office again unless Henry goes with me."

The door opened, and Mrs. Webb came in.

"So sorry to disturb you, dear, but there is some one wanting to see you; and as it seems to me that he may be an impostor, I thought I would just come and ask you a question or two first."

Janet looked her answer; she knew Mrs. Webb would tell her own tale without help.

"I cannot think you know this man; he won't say

where he comes from, or give his name either; but I am sure he is a foreigner, I should say an Italian, by his dark appearance; he keeps on saying he wants to see Mees Wolferston."

"I believe I know who it is," said Janet; "he had better come here and speak to me."

"Really, my dear, had you not better see him in the hall? Suppose he is a swindler; he may take your watch and your purse—rob the house, in fact—and be off before we know a word about it."

"No, he is not a swindler"—Janet smiled—"but I can see him in the dining-room, if you don't like him to come up-stairs."

"Yes, dear, I really think it will be much better; and it so happens I'm sitting there just now, doing my accounts; it wouldn't do at all, you know, for you to see a person of this kind alone."

"Then I am afraid he must come up here after all," said Janet, resolutely; "I must see him alone, for I know his business is private; you can settle it whichever way you please."

Mrs. Webb had learned by this time that this short decided manner of Janet's, which she alone had the art of eliciting, admitted of no appeal, and therefore she said Janet had better come down-stairs, she really could not give unknown foreigners the run of her house.

Said very spitefully, but entirely lost on her young cousin. Janet guessed that her visitor was Leroux, and shrinking, as she had learned to shrink during the last few hours, from Mr. Painson's good offices, it was very painful to be obliged to refer this man to him—for doubtless the Frenchman had come to make her an offer of his services—on the subject of the will.

It was Leroux—looking so exceedingly bright and happy that for a moment Janet thought he must be the bearer of good tidings.

"Have you brought me any message from Rookstone?" she said.

Leroux shrugged his shoulders.

"I have a message for you, Mees Wolferston, but it is not from Rookstone."

"Who is it from?" Janet spoke very coldly.

"It is from the sister of mademoiselle, Madame Wolferston, she is in London now."

"In London!" Janet got up from her chair; she must go to Mary at once.

"I have not yet given the message." The Frenchman looked surprised at her impatience—at Rookstone Janet had appeared such a quiet, sedate personage; he paused till she had seated herself, and then he shrugged his shoulders.

"Mademoiselle, there has been a great deal of chagrin at Rookstone. First, the bebbie have died. Ah! it is a very sad accident; it is too horrible that a child's life must pay for a bundle of wood."

"I heard of the accident, but I don't understand," said Janet.

"Ah! mademoiselle have not heard how the accident have arrived! Bon! Monsieur is driving madame one fine evening, and madame has the bebbie on her knees; there is an old and ugly woman—Robbins or Kitee she is called—and this old woman puts it in her head to gather a faggot in the path of the carriage. Madame talks to the bebbie, and I imagine monsieur looks on and smiles. Suddenly, crac! the horses jump, the carriage turn over, and madame and the bebbie are on the ground. Well, mademoiselle, we all go; I especially lead on the rest. I find madame and her bebbie and bring them home; they

seem well, quite gay and happy, and then in the evening I hear a cry from the nursery. Madame is there, she bend over the bebbie. She say, 'Run, fly, fetch the doctor, quick, quick, my child dies!' Well, mademoiselle, I go, I run, I almost fly; but of what use? Alas! none. When I arrive back with the doctor the bebbie is only a little corpse!"

Janet sighed deeply.

"How is my sister now?" she asked.

Leroux shook his head very gravely, and his eyebrows followed the movement of his shoulders.

"Ah!"—he drew out the word—"that is ended a serious question, Mees Wolferston; but you will see her to-morrow, and then you will know for yourself. At first, madame do not eat or drink, and I think she do not sleep neither, for she keep so pale and ill; then she write to you two, three times; I hear her tell Mr. Wolferston she will do so, and he become very angry ended."

"Stop," said Janet, "I do not want to hear of any disagreements between Mr. and Mrs. Wolferston."

The Frenchman opened his eyes, and the corners of his moustaches rose perceptibly.

"Bien, mademoiselle, as you will; but your sister will tell you, and everybody at Rookstone will tell you also, that Mr. Wolferston is a change man. No one know what has 'appen to him; but since a week he is more extraordinary than I can say; he suspect everything; he suspect madame and me too, and suddenly yesterday he tell to me to pack everything he shall be able to want for several months, and to come in France with him."

"To France!" exclaimed Janet, but the Frenchman went on.

"Well, I was very much surprise, and we all were surprise. I do not think madame wish to go, for I see her always crying. Yesterday, but just as we go in train, Mr. Wolferston leave her for one moment, and she beckon me. 'Leroux,' she say, 'as soon as we shall arrive in London, you will go to my sister in Vincent Square, and you will tell to her to come to me to-morrow morning, at eight o'clock, at the hotel we go to.'"

"And where is she now?"

"We are all in a hotel in Cavendish Square—a very dull place, I think, for London."

"Stay"—while she spoke Janet had opened her desk—"I will send my sister a note."

In her excitement at Leroux's tidings, she had entirely forgotten Richard's prohibition. She wrote a few hasty lines, and Leroux departed with them. He could not tell her how long his master meant to remain in London, but he said he fancied Mr. Wolferston must have some business to transact before he could start for France.

When he was gone, it seemed to Janet that she was in a dream. Was Mary a prisoner, being carried off against her will? and what had happened to Richard to cause the change Leroux spoke of? She remembered Richard's prohibition now, but she no longer heeded it. It seemed to her that if Mary, loving her husband as she did, could send for her in this secret manner, she must have some urgent cause for so doing, and that she was bound to protect her sister at all risks. That warm, sheltering love, the germ of motherhood, which holds so large a place in some women's natures, stirred Janet's heart now so strongly that she could not keep back her tears. It seemed as if she could hardly wait till eight o'clock to-morrow.